

*The Nature and Excellency of the HEAVENLY
TREASURE, and the Way to Obtain it.*

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at the

CHARITY-SCHOOL,

I N

Gravel-Lane, Southwark,

JANUARY 2, 17th.

By JOHN BARKER.

Publiſh'd at the Requeſt of the Mana-
gers and Others that heard it.

L O N D O N,

Printed for JOHN CLARK, at the Bible
and Crown in the Poultry, near Cheapside,

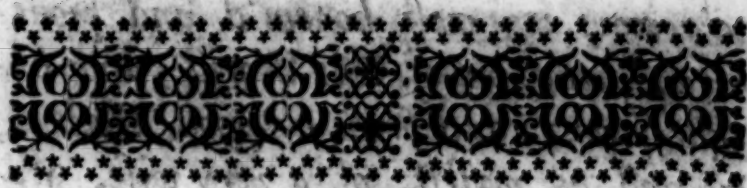
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An Exposition of the Old and New Testament; wherein each Chapter is sum'd up in its Contents, the sacred Texts inserted at large in distinct Paragraphs, each Paragraph reduc'd to its proper Head, the Sense given and largely illustrated, with practical Remarks and Observations. By the Late Reverend Mr. MATTHEW HENRY. In Six Volumes, in Folio.

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TO
Mr. Peter Coveney,
 OF
COLCHESTER.

SIR,



WHEN I yielded to the
 Importunity of those
 Gentlemen to Print this
 SERMON, at whose Re-
 quest I preach'd it, I
 thought it a proper Op-
 portunity of telling the World how great
 an Obligation I think myself under to
 You for the Respect You show'd me in my
 tender Age. After it had pleased GOD

iv The DEDICATION.

to remove my most honour'd and pious Grandfather out of this World, and by that Stroke to deprive my good Mother, as well as myself, of a very wise, affectionate, and faithful Parent, You were pleas'd to express a generous Concern, that his Design to educate me for the Work of the Ministry should not miscarry; and this I remember with the deeper Sense of Gratitude as my dear Father was then dead also. You have sometimes express'd a Satisfaction that you have liv'd to see your Design accomplish'd, and were pleas'd that the Providence of GOD should so order it, that some of the first Years of my Ministry were spent in the Place where I drew my first Breath: So far as I gave any acceptable Assistance to your worthy Ministers, or was any way serviceable to the Interest of our Great LORD, I review those Years with Pleasure, and I take leave now publicly to thank You, and all my Friends at Colchester for the Comfort I enjoy'd there.

The DEDICATION.



AS agreeably scituated as I now am, I cannot, I ought not to forget to wish and pray in a particular Manner for the Success of the Gospel amongst you; it would be a great Satisfaction to me to hope, that this Sermon might contribute something, if ever so little to that good End; perhaps the Occasion on which it was preach'd, may recommend it to some amongst you, especially considering that You also have lately erected a Charity School at Colchester, I doubt not on the same Foundations of Religion, Loyalty, and Compassion to the Indigent, with This, and the Management of which is put into such Hands as give the fairest Prospects of its good Success.

HOWEVER I am well satisfy'd the Subject of this Discourse will recommend it to You, Sir, who have always profess'd a great Regard to a Portion beyond the present World.

I shall be thankfull to GOD if I may be able in any respect to comfort you

iv The DEDICATION.

you in old-Age who kindly assisted me in my Youth; to this Purpose I present you with this Account of the Heavenly Treasure, and wish it may serve to revive your Heart under the Burdens and Infirmities of declining Nature.

I wish you, Sir, the best Supports, now especially in the last Stage of Life; May you finish well, and obtain a good Report! And may we all who are the Posterity of them who feared the LORD greatly, imitate their Example, obtain like precious Faith, and know within ourselves that we have in Heaven a better and an enduring Substance.

I am,

Your obliged Kinsman,

Hackney,
Jan. 11. 1748.

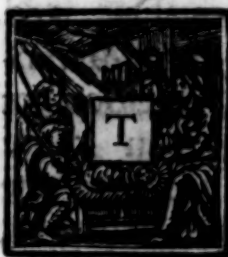
and humble Servant,

JOHN BARKER.



LUKE XVIII. 22.

*And thou shalt have
Treasure in Heaven.*



THE Occasion on which
Our Lord JESUS CHRIST
spake these Words, was
some Discourse He had
with a young Ruler a-
mong the Jews concern-
ing the Way to obtain Eternal Life :
A certain Ruler asked him, saying, Good Ver. 18.
Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal
Life? This Person seems perswaded
there was a State of future Happiness,
convinc'd that some good Thing was
to be done to obtain it, and affected
with some good Desires of using a
proper Means in order to come at
this happy End ; and yet by the Man-
ner of his Question he appears ignorant of
God's Righteousness, and willing to go a-
bout to establish his own. Our LORD's
Answer

Answer to this Question, is this, *Why*
 Ver. 19, 20. *callest thou me Good? none is Good save*
One, that is God. Thou knowest the Com-
mandments, Do not commit Adultery, Do
not Steal, &c. I cannot but think this
 Answer intended to assist the Faith,
 and direct the Practice of this Enqui-
 rer; and yet, there seems to be some-
 what of Reproof in it also: I suppose
 the Sense of it to be this: " If you
 " take me for a mere Man, this Title
 " does not belong to me; but if you
 " believe me more than a Man, and
 " really and truly GOD, as I indeed
 " am, then this Title is my Due, and
 " your Faith is your great Advan-
 " tage; but for your Question of
 " inheriting Eternal Life, you know
 " what you are taught, Keeping the
 " Commandments is your Religion,
 " this is the Way in which you *Jews*
 " expect eternal Life; I recommend
 " Obedience to the Law in order to
 " this, tho' you are much mistaken,
 " young Man, if you imagine you can
 " keep the Commandments perfectly,
 " and more still, if you suppose that
 " you become hereby entitled to Eter-
 " nal Life, " Our SAVIOUR seems to
 intend by recommending to this Ru-
 ler second Table Duties, partly to
 teach him and all Men, that Mora-
 lity is one Part of real Religion; part-
 ly

ly to shew him how sadly his Spiritual Guides had corrupted the Law, who insisted so much on Rites and Ceremonies, as not to teach even common Honesty, and especially to set him right in his Notion of Obedience: How much he was Wrong here, appears from the Reply he makes to our SAVIOUR'S Answer, *All these have I kept from my Youth up.* Here this Jew discovers great Ignorance of the spiritual Nature of the Law, and of the Divine Nature of CHRIST; he seems uneasy to be put upon a Duty he thought he had long and well perform'd; he expected Commendation, rather than such Advice: his Reply has an Air of Challenge in it, and fancy'd Perfection; and this brings CHRIST, whose Words were profitable for Reproof and Instruction, to discover this Person to himself, and to shew him that there was a certain Lust which lay conceal'd under a Shew of external Religion, and had full Dominion over his Heart. *Now when Jesus heard these Things, He said unto him, yet lackest thou one Thing; sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the Poor, and thou shalt have Treasure in Heaven, q. d.* "Will you part with your Estate for eternal Life? Will you do this one good Thing in order to inherit
 B " what

“ what you seem so desirous of? Will
 “ you sell your large Possessions, and
 “ give the Price thereof to the Poor,
 “ if hereby you may obtain durable
 “ Riches in Heaven?” It is plain,
 CHRIST did not intend this Case to
 be drawn into a Precedent, these are
 not the general Terms on which He
 offers eternal Life; it is but very sel-
 dom (Thanks be to GOD) that Chri-
 stianity becomes so expensive a Thing
 as this to any of its Professors; but
 now, it was very proper to try the
 Faith and Charity of this young Self-
 justiciary, and to expose the Mischief,
 and Danger of one allow’d, and pre-
 vailing Sin.

THE Method I intend to observe in
 speaking to these Words, is this:

I. I WILL enquire what is meant by
 a Treasure in Heaven.

II. WHEREIN consists the Advan-
 tage and Excellency of this?

III. WHAT we should do to obtain it?

IV. WHAT is the Use we should
 make of this Subject?

I. WHAT is meant by a Treasure
 in Heaven?

THE

THE Expression is plainly allusive and metaphorical, but of very obvious Meaning, very proper to the Case in hand, and very instructive to us at this Distance of Time. The Thing intended by our SAVIOUR, is that eternal Life this *Jew* had been enquiring after: By the *Treasure* in Heaven therefore here recommended, I understand, a State of future and eternal Blessedness, or the compleat Happiness of the Soul in a State of unchangeable, and immortal Glory. And it may be proper to enquire, Why this is represented as a *Treasure*? And why as a *Treasure* in Heaven?

I. WHY is this call'd a *Treasure*? I answer,

(1.) To insinuate that it is something really and substantially good. So are not the *Treasures* of this World, but relatively, and comparatively only, as they are used, and improv'd by us, so they are either good, or evil to us; it so happens that present Possessions, as eagerly pursu'd as they are, become not seldom hurtful and pernicious; what we so much court and covet, may be, and often is, our Temptation, and Snare. Should the Riches of this World, for Instance, allure the Mind, and make our Hearts proud, or our Looks haughty, should they feed a

covetous Desire, or become Occasions of Luxury and Profuseness, then are they laid up to the Hurt of the Owner, or laid out to his Prejudice and Ruin. But the heavenly Treasure is not capable of this Abuse, it becomes not an Occasion of Evil to us, but is a rich Provision for the precious Soul, and in a proper Sense a solid and substantial Good.

(2) To intimate that it is very precious and valuable.

A Treasure is something more than ordinary valuable, the common Injoyments of Life are not esteem'd worthy of this Name, it is something costly and precious, which lies near to Mens Hearts, and for the most part uppermost in their Affections; hence many Thoughts about it, Care and Fear that it be not lost, and painful Sollicitude to lodge it in Places the most secure and safe. In this Respect how well may Grace and Glory be call'd a Treasure! What is precious to a well-instructed Mind comparatively with the well-grounded Hope of future Happiness! He only has gain'd the *Pearl of great Price*, who is rich towards God; could you collect all the Rarities of the World together, they would neither enrich, nor satisfy an immortal Soul. What *Solomon* says
of

of Wisdom, is truly applicable here,
The Merchandize of it is better than Prov. iii.
the Merchandize of Silver, and the Gain 14, 15.
thereof than fine Gold. It is more preci-
ous than Rubies; and all the Things thou
canst desire, are not to be compar'd with it.
 The sparkling Diamond does not so
 much exceed our common Dust and
 Clay, as the heavenly outshines an
 earthly Treasure; *The Fruit of this is*
better than Gold, yea, than fine Gold; and
the Revenue of it than choice Silver.

(3.) It is thus represented the more
 probably to engage our Affection,
 and the more effectually to draw out
 our Hearts and Endeavours after it.

WHERE *your Treasure is*, says CHRIST, *there will your Hearts be also.* ^{Matth. vi. 21.} What
 Men account their Treasure they co-
 vet, and pursue; hence it is that world-
 ly Men make it their chief Care to
 be Rich, to gain, and increase their
 Estate is their great Contrivance, and
 continual Endeavour; shew them the
 Way to obtain large Possessions, and
 you forthwith inspire their Hearts with
 Joy, and animate them with the most
 vigorous Resolution, they burn with
 Desire to obtain these, and to accom-
 plish their Purpose, think it not too
 much to rise up early, and sit up late,
 and eat the Bread of Carefulness; that
 it is their Treasure, is an Answer to a
 thou.

thousand Difficulties, and esteem'd a sufficient Recompence for the Cares, and Fatigues of Day and Night : How much more then might we hope the heavenly Treasure might have this Effect upon reasonable Men ! A Treasure which endureth for ever, one would think, should influence the Heart of every one to whom it is reveal'd and offer'd, that it is so real, and so rich a Treasure, will surely inspire the Poor and Needy, (and such we all of us are) with Desire and Resolution to obtain it at any Expenditure of Pains and Labour, and the rather, because we are encourag'd to hope, that if we seek it early, and earnestly, we shall find it ;

Prov. viii. 18. and obtaining this, obtain *Riches and Honour ; yea, durable Riches, and Righteousness.*

2. WHY is it called a Treasure in Heaven ?

(1.) To distinguish it no doubt from every other Treasure. And the difference lies both in the Nature of it, and in its Duration.

IT is of a more excellent Nature.

EARTHLY Treasures are shadowy, and unsubstantial, it is uncertain whether we shall obtain them, and equally so, how long we shall be able to possess or relish them ; at best they yield but a low ignoble Comfort, and the

the Life of Man either as to the Continuance, or Comfort of it *does not consist in the Abundance of the Things which he possesseth.* We see Men not only die and leave, but live and loath their outward Abundance, the Appetite needs preparing oftentimes as well as the Object; and we seldom think there is any great matter in Riches or Pleasures, but just till they are obtain'd and enjoy'd, then the Appetite sickens, and the Object lies neglected; It is no uncommon thing to flight at one time what they did but too eagerly pursue at another; and 'tis hard to say, whether we may not even hate to Morrow, what to Day we court and covet, such is the Weakness of Humane Nature, and the Impotency of earthly Good. But the Treasure our SAVIOUR here recommends, is rich and precious, has a real intrinsick Value in it, is the same at all Times, and to all Possessors, is Great without Diminution, Good without mixtures of Evil, and Fresh and New without danger of Decays and Death; it satisfies without tiring, and delights without abating its Force and Beauty; it is an Object suitable to the Nature of an immortal, and agreeable to the Taste of a refin'd Soul, rational and manly, divine and heavenly.

It is of an eternal Duration. HENCE

HENCE call'd *Bags that wax not old; A Treasure in Heaven that faileth not, and durable Riches and Righteousness.* This Treasure, as it suits the Nature of our Souls, so it is commensurate to our Immortality; the God, who changes not for ever, both gives, and makes, and is this Treasure. It is of the Nature of an earthly Treasure to fail, God has written a Vanity upon the whole World, and we receive its best Enjoyments with this mortifying Inscription, *All these perish in the using.* Whether our earthly Treasures will last us our Life-time, is very uncertain; but most certainly longer they cannot last: *For naked came we out of our Mother's Womb, and naked must we return thither.* But the heavenly Treasure, is solid and substantial, durable and eternal; its Continuance to everlasting Ages, gives it its intrinsick Value, and makes it vastly superior to every other Good. How often must Men be told, That *Riches are not for ever; that they make themselves Wings, and flee away, as an Eagle towards Heaven!* How great an Evidence is the present Juncture of this Truth, and how loudly does it call upon us practically to believe that the heavenly, is the only sure and durable Treasure; if ever the present World appear'd in Disgrace,

Prov.
xxiii. 5.

Pro.xxvii.
24.

Disgrace, and there was a more than ordinary Reason to secure and prize an Interest in that to come; it is now, when Mens Estates are dwindled away into nothing, flourishing Circumstances chang'd on a sudden, and so the Wantonness of great Prosperity rebuk'd and punish'd with all the Miseries of great Adversity.

(2.) To intimate, that it is a safe and secure Possession.

So that Exhortation of our Blessed SAVIOUR, *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon Earth, where Moth and Rust doth corrupt, and where Thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves Treasures in Heaven, where neither Moth nor Rust doth corrupt, and where Thieves do not break through and steal.* Earthly Treasures are subject to Violence, Corruption, and Rapine, consuming Flames devour them, desolating Inundations lay them waste, the Sons of Violence wrest them out of our Hands, the Providence of God takes them from one, and gives them to another; that which is out of our Hands, may be always so; and that which is in our Hands to Day, may be snatch'd away to Morrow. You see what Havock is made with the Estates and Possessions of this World every Day; the same Man
C may

may be poor, then rich, then poor again; now live plentifully, and in a little Time be reduc'd to want; to Day abound, to Morrow suffer Need; one while give Charity, at another receive and want it: Thus fluctuating and uncertain is all the Wealth of the present World. But the heavenly Treasure is secur'd by a better Title, and held with more abundant Certainty; he who is rich towards God, is blessed with a secure Portion, he has in Heaven a better, and an enduring Substance; Things Above, are out of the Reach of Accidents, free from Violence and Corruption, and expos'd at no Time to any Kind of Uncertainty.

(3.) To intimate, that it is out of our Sight, and not the Object of Sense, but of Faith only.

It is a certain Treasure, but it cannot now be seen; no Man can ascend into Heaven and bring down from thence any part of its Treasures; we must believe, and take God's Word for it, and depend upon him, who is True and Faithful, and cannot deceive us. This I see is the Reason why the heavenly Treasure is often neglected, we are chiefly affected by sensibly Objects; Things invisible are too often disregarded, because unseen; but the

the more is the Pity, and the greater is the Shame. We are not left without an abundant Evidence of the Reality and Glory of [the future World, the Reason of Men will greatly recommend and approve the Faith of Christians; the Light of Nature teaches us, that there must be a State provided by the Great AUTHOR of our Beings, suitable to the Nature and Duration of our Souls. G O D has open'd to us a Prospect of that World in his Word; our Lord JESUS CHRIST came down from Heaven, and has brought us a Report concerning it, *That it is an exceeding good Land*; and a divine Faith will enable us to see the Reality and Glory of it; as *Moses* beheld *Canaan* from the Top of *Pisgah*, so may the Believer now look into Heaven itself by lively Faith. Many good Men have experienc'd this to be the Mount of Vision to their Souls, and experienc'd the Truth of that of the Apostle, *Faith* Heb. xii. *is the Substance of Things hoped for, the Evidence of Things not seen.* The Invisibility therefore of the heavenly Treasure, ought to be no Objection to the Reality of it, nor any Reason of Distrust or Suspicion to us concerning it; if Men can trust the Ocean, and venture their earthly Substance with the Winds and Seas, and consign their

Effects to the most distant Parts of the World, upon the Credit of a Fellow-Creature, they ought much more to depend upon the Testimony and Truth of their Great CREATOR for their more enduring Substance: He that will take the Word of a Man like himself for his earthly Treasure, ought much more to take the Word, the Promise, nay, the Oath of GOD for the heavenly one.

II. I am now to shew the Excellency and Advantage of a Treasure in Heaven.

THAT this is a most excellent Thing, may be concluded from what has been observ'd already concerning the Nature, Duration, and Safety of this Treasure; and may be further illustrated from the following Considerations:

I. IT is the Portion of Children. A Gift not of common Bounty, but of special Grace and Favour; an Inheritance not divided among the Children of Men at large, but to such as are strictly the Children of GOD. Worldly Possessions are often the Fruit of Pains and Labour, or the Effect of Contrivance and Ingenuity, or drop'd in upon Men by what they call Chance or Accident, *No Man knoweth Love or Hatred, by all that is before them; all Things*

Eccl. ix.
1, 2, 11.

Things come alike to all; and there is one Event to the Righteous, and to the Wicked; the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong, nor Bread to the Wise, nor Riches to Men of Understanding. It is evident by the Character of most who possess earthly Riches, that God makes very little account hereof, the most despicable Men are often very rich, Persons of mean Parts, ignoble Birth, and low Esteem, nay, the very worst and vilest Men not seldom flow in Plenty, and have vast and large Possessions; such a one as Haman, could tell of the Glory of his Riches, *Ester v. 11.* and the Psalmist says of the Wicked, *That their Eyes stand out with Fatness, and they have more than Heart can wish: Behold, these are the Ungodly, who prosper in the World! they increase in Riches.* *Psalm lxxiii. 7. 12.* But the heavenly Treasure is the Portion of Sons, the Inheritance of Saints, none are entitled to this but the Friends of God, and the Favourites of Heaven; there must be the Goodwill of God towards us, and the Good-work of God wrought in us, we must be the Objects of his Grace, and the Workmanship of his Spirit, if ever we possess the heavenly Treasure; none can come at the Riches of Glory, but such as are call'd, and chosen, and faithful; Treasures on Earth are

are given promiscuously, that in Heaven is appropriated to such as are near and dear to G O D.

2. IT is the Price of invaluable Blood.

THE heavenly Treasure is the Gift of G O D, through J E S U S C H R I S T our Lord who sustained our Nature, and sustained our Punishments; we had never been capable of it, had not the Son of G O D been made Man, and made Sin for us, *offering up himself thro' the Eternal Spirit without Spot to God.* We are Creatures whose Condition is miserable, as well as criminal; Sin has robb'd and spoil'd us of our Riches, Original Righteousness is lost, and our whole Natures corrupted and deprav'd, we inherit the Sin and Misery of our first Parents, and are poor, and blind, and naked, wanting all Things; *But ye know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who tho' he was rich, yet for our Sakes became poor, that we through his Poverty might be made rich.* We are enrich'd at the L O R D's Expence; the heavenly Treasure is the Fruit of infinite Toil and Labour, of bloody Sweat, and Groans of Death: *We are not redeem'd with corruptible Things, as Silver and Gold, but with the precious Blood of Jesus Christ,* Nothing can give a Sinner a Title to Heaven, but the Merit of the Eternal

2 Cor. viii.

9.

1 Pet. i.
18.

nal SON OF GOD; it is a purchas'd Possession, *But Man knoweth not the Price thereof; neither is it found in the Land of the Living.* *The Depth saith, It is not in me: And the Sea, It is not with me: It cannot be gotten for Gold, neither shall Silver be weighed for the Price thereof; it cannot be valued with the Gold of Ophir, with the precious Onyx, and Sapphire. The Topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure Gold.* GOD had been for ever asham'd to be call'd our GOD, had not *the Word been made Flesh, and dwelt amongst us; had He not been made Sin, and suffer'd in our Stead: And this Consideration, should enhance the Value of this Treasure in our Esteem, and endear the Purchaser of it to our Souls.*

3. It is a Provision for the nobler and more excellent Part, the precious and immortal Soul.

EARTHLY Treasures reach not this; but leave the Soul where they found it, if not rather worse than better: Nothing under the Sun can felicitate an immortal Spirit; our Bodies may as well live upon Air, or breath without it, as our Souls be satisfy'd with earthly Good: *in the midst of this Sufficiency we shall be in Straits.* After Men have suffer'd their Time and Affections to run waste upon the
World

World ever so long, wander'd over the whole Creation, and gone from one Thing to another ever so long, they still remain restless and unsatisfied. But the heavenly Treasure is a Portion for the never-dying Spirit: the Soul, which is so truly the Man, is hereby enrich'd and provided for; The Body is a perishing Thing, and the present World of short Continuance only; Death puts Rich and Poor upon a Level, and makes an End of all these Distinctions among Men. He therefore is the truly rich Man, who is rich towards GOD, he in a proper Sense happy, who has a Mansion preparing for him Above. I would therefore say, Whatever becomes of worldly Possessions and a dying Body, give me, O my GOD, an Interest in that *Inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven.*

1 Pet. i.
4

4. IT is fully satisfying, and completely good.

THIS can never be said of any Thing here below; the Desires of our Minds can never be satisfy'd with Baggs of Silver, intellectual Pleasures may as soon appease our bodily Thirst and Hunger, as worldly Possessions satisfy the Breathings of our Souls; there is no Sutableness, and therefore there
can

can be no Delight. We see it true in Fact, that the Rich are not the most easy, safe, and happy Men; on the contrary, the impatient Thirst of Gain which puts them upon adding to their Substance, usually increases in Proportion as that is enlarg'd. They who flow in the greatest Abundance, are commonly the most fatigu'd, and the most incumber'd; they are Slaves to alternate Care and Fear; hence we are warn'd against a covetous Temper, advis'd, *If Riches increase, not to set our Hearts upon them*; and exhorted, *not to trust in uncertain Riches, but in the Living God*. He who said, *Soul, take thine Ease, thou hast Goods laid up for many Years*, is recorded for a Fool, and pronounc'd Miserable. Riches are not satisfying in the smoothest Prosperity; much less then in the Day of G O D's Wrath, when the Body is visited with Pain or Sicknes, the Soul startled with a Sense of Sin, or the World around us shaken with the Judgments of the L O R D Almighty. But the heavenly Treasure satisfies the Soul, and makes Amends for the Absence or Loss of every earthly Good; a Title to this, will take the Snare out of our good Things, and the Sting out of our evil ones, will assuage the Force of grinding Pain,
D relieve

relieve the Distress of Poverty itself, and enable the Christian to fill up the Vacancies of Life with easy and comfortable Reflections. When we are toss'd in this tempestuous World with ever so many adverse Winds, when the Waves and Billows of Affliction go over our Heads, when *without are Fightings, and within are Fears*, yet will the Hope of Heaven, be as an *Anchor of the Souls both sure and stedfast, entering into that within the Vail*. The Prospect of approaching Glory, gives an Accent to the Pleasures of Life, brightens the Darkness of Death itself, and reconciles the Soul to the entire Will of GOD; and the actual Possession makes the Happiness *perfect and entire, wanting nothing*: This Treasure once obtain'd, enriches the happy Soul for ever, and remains an unchangeable Good, without the least Mixture of Evil.

III. WHAT should we do to obtain this heavenly Treasure?

SOME think, they can do nothing in order to obtain it, and so become fatally remiss and careless: And others, perhaps, imagine they can with great Ease, do all that is needful at any Time, and so become bold, presumptuous, and offensive to GOD; the Scripture plainly rebukes these
Opinions,

Opinions, and seem to me clearly to reveal the Duty which GOD requires here; I shall direct you in it in the following manner.

I. B E G of GOD effectually to persuade you of the Excellency, and Advantage of this Treasure.

LOOK into your own Hearts, and attend to the Voice of Reason and Conscience; look into the Holy Scriptures, and read over the large Account given there of the Reality and Glory of the future Happiness, the Necessity that lies upon us to look after it, and the dreadful Condition of such as finally neglect it; Look abroad into the World, and consult the Experience of all your Fellow-Creatures, and learn from them, who are the truly happy Men; And then resolve to look up to GOD for Wisdom and Grace to conduct yourselves aright in this Matter. Assure yourselves, whatever serves to magnify an earthly, or to diminish the Heavenly Treasure in your Esteem, is a Temptation, and a Snare. Beseech GOD, for the Sake of CHRIST, That you may not be fatally deluded here: Pray for *the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of Christ; that the Eyes of your Understanding may be enlightened; that ye may know what is the Hope of his Calling,*

Ephes. 1.
17, 18.

and what the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints. Be fearful when you compare the heavenly and earthly Treasure together, lest you should not rightly distinguish between Things so vastly different, and beg of GOD, after you have taken Pains with your own Hearts, not to leave you without a thorough and effectual Persuasion, That, although the Generality are cumber'd about many Things, *but one Thing is needful.*

2. COME unto CHRIST.

THIS young Ruler was undoubtedly right in coming to CHRIST with his important Question, *What shall I do to inherit Eternal Life?* None so proper to consult in such an Affair, as He who came down from Heaven in order to teach the Ignorant the Way thither. Himself has told us, *That He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and no Man can come unto the Father, but by him.* When the Apostles Paul and Silas, were ask'd by the trembling Jailor this important Question, *Sirs,*

AGS xvi.
30, 31,

What must I do to be saved? their immediate, and yet most deliberate Answer, was, *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.* Surely, if there be a plain Truth in all the Bible, it is this, *That God has given to us Eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son.* Let

us

us carefully observe this; That the Death of CHRIST has purchas'd this Treasure, his Word only reveals it, and his Hand alone bestows it. If we are not blinded, we must needs see that we are vile and guilty Creatures, weak and impotent, wretched and miserable; we are both without a Title to Heaven, and altogether unmeet to enjoy a State so holy; and if ever our guilty Souls be justify'd and acquitted, and our diseas'd Souls be heal'd and sanctify'd, it must be by the Righteousness, Grace and Spirit of JESUS CHRIST. His is a Great and Precious Name in Heaven, and GOD has expressly declar'd from thence, That *there is Salvation in no other: For there* Acts iv. *is no other Name given under Heaven* 12. *among Men, whereby we can be saved, but his only.* Whatsoever therefore leads us to rest and settle upon this Foundation which GOD has laid, will be likely to prove serviceable and saving to us: *He that believeth on the* Job iii. *Son, hath everlasting Life; and he that* 36. *believeth not the Son, shall not see Life; but the Wrath of God abideth on him.*

3. You must deny yourselves.

IF any Man will come unto me, let him Matth. *deny himself.* In this Chapter you have xxvi. 24. the Parable of the Self-justifying Pharisee, and the Self-condemning Publican, the

ver. 19.

the latter of which, is said to be justify'd rather than the other, and the Reason assign'd is, *Every one who exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.* There is no Eternal Life for them who trust in themselves that they are righteous, and despise others. The Jews were rejected and ruin'd by this vain Confidence in themselves, *They were ignorant of God's Righteousness, and went about to establish to themselves a Righteousness of their own; not submitting themselves to the Righteousness of God.* Sinful-self opposes God's Holiness, and what may be call'd Religious-self, is an Enemy to the Mediator's Grace and Glory; till therefore we are brought to part with our beloved Sins, and to disclaim the Dignity and Power of our own Works, we are in no wise likely to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; without this, we are so far from being likely to obtain the Heavenly Treasure, that we do not, as I conceive, so much as see, and rightly apprehend our Need of it.

4. You must keep the Commandments.

By this, I mean to recommend a sincere and uniform Holiness, as the Soul's Meetness for Eternal Life. Although no mere Man is able perfectly

ly to keep the Commandments of GOD; yet every good Man knows Evangelical Holiness to be essential in true Religion. *Obedience is the best Sa-* Micah vi.
crifice; and God has shewed us what is^s
good, and what the Lord requires of us;
viz. To do justly, to love Mercy, and to
walk humbly with God. Our keeping
the Commandments of GOD, will
never give us a Title to Heaven; but
without a sincere Desire to do this,
and a regular, steady Endeavour to
approve ourselves obedient, and duti-
ful, we can by no means give a suf-
ficient Evidence that we are in the
Way thither. *If thou wilt enter into*
Life, keep the Commandments; says
CHRIST. Intimating Direction, no
doubt, as well as Reproof. There
are Things to be done, as well
as Things to be believ'd in the
Christian Religion; and our Great
MASTER expects our Compliance,
and Obedience in both. Some indeed
tell us, there is no Need of Faith;
and others, that there is none of Holi-
ness: But both these are much mi-
staken; *For without Faith, it is impos-*
sible to please God: And, without Holi-
ness, no Man shall see the Lord; i. e.
enjoy, and be happy in GOD as a
Portion for ever. Faith is the Prin-
ciple of the Divine Life; and Holi-
ness

ness is the Image of the Divine Nature; both are necessary, and lovely; God hath joyn'd them together, and no Man ought to put them asunder.

AND now, as the Application of this Subject, we may infer,

1. THE Vanity of the present World, and the Glory of that to come. The best and greatest of this World's Treasure are liable to Corruption, attended with great Uncertainty, and incapable of yielding a solid, and lasting Satisfaction: All the Hope therefore which rests and centers here must needs prove as the yielding up of the Ghost: But the Treasure in Heaven faileth not; here are *Bags that wax not old, Bread which perishes not, but endureth unto Eternal Life.* How happy were it therefore, that while the Word and Providence of God are pouring Contempt upon present Things, and magnifying the Greatness and Importance of those to come, they might engage our serious Attention, and closest Pursuit.

2. THE Danger of large Possessions.

THIS is the Reflexion of our LORD Himself upon the Subject before us,
 ver. 24, 25. *How hardly shall they that have Riches enter*

enter into the Kingdom of God ! for it is easier for a Camel to go through a Needle's Eye, than for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of God. The Meaning is, Men are apt overmuch to prize and value earthly Treasures, to pursue 'em too eagerly, to love 'em when obtain'd too intensely, to put an idolatrous Trust in them, to part with them, when forc'd out of their Hands, with unreasonable Regret and immoderate Sorrow of Heart ; not to use and improve them to the best Purposes while they live, and not to dispose of them aright, it may be when they come to die : and by this Means Riches become a Snare, hazard the Comfort of those who possess them, and endanger their Souls. But, yet the Almighty Grace of GOD can break down the Power of this Temptation, and raise Trophies to itself among those who have ever so many Temptations to draw them another Way ; *They that heard this, said, Who then can be saved ?* ver. 16, 27.
And He said, The Things which are impossible with Men, are possible with God.

3. How many bid fair for Heaven, who yet come short of it.

WHO would have thought this Ruler would not have follow'd CHRIST ? He little imagin'd CHRIST would have set the Terms of Eternal Life so very
 E high ;

high; nor had he done so, (it should seem) but to expose the Lust which lay indulg'd in his Heart. How well the Searcher of Hearts knew this Man, appears by the Sequel of the Story,
 ver. 23. *When he heard this, he was very sorrowful; for he was very rich.* His large Possessions drew away his Heart, and carried him back into the World again. There is often a seeming, when there is not a real Conversion; many are nigh to the Kingdom of Heaven, who yet never actually enter into it; almost they are persuaded to be Christians, but not altogether; some of CHRIST'S Terms may be liked by unregenerate Men, but not all; *Yet lackest thou one Thing;* and that Want spoil'd all. If our Intention to close with CHRIST, end in faint Desires, and some good Purposes only, it will avail us nothing.

4. LET me take Occasion from hence, to recommend the Heavenly Treasure to your Esteem and Pursuit.

AND this I would do with so much the greater Earnestness, because of the great Mistake of the Generality, even under the Light of the Gospel. The Doctrine of the Gospel, is like a Treasure hid in a Field, which few enquire after, and fewer still find. Saving Grace is that Pearl of great Price, most worthy to be sought diligently, and valu'd above
 above

above a thousand Worlds; but they are comparatively few who resolve to go, and sell all they have, and buy it. How well would it be for their Souls if Men employ'd the same affectionate Cost and Labour about the heavenly, that they do about an earthly Treasure? I beseech you, Sirs, as you value your Souls, take Heed of pursuing the present World, to the Neglect and Loss of Heaven. You must needs perceive that every Thing here Below is uncertain, vain, and perishing; should you obtain never so large an Estate, it is but an earthly Treasure, and must be left in a little Time; the Year you are enter'd upon may be your last in this World, and finish your Labour and your Life together. How many gay Prospects, and great Designs of worldly Wealth has Death spoil'd the last Year? How miserable will your Condition be, if you are found at last among the Men of this World, whose Portion is in this Life! *Beware lest God take you away* Job xxxvi,
with his Stroke; then a great Ransome can- 18, 19.
not deliver thee: Will he esteem thy Riches?
No, not Gold, nor all the Force of Strength,
 I should esteem it a great Happiness if I could prevail with one ignorant, destitute Creature to incline his Ear to Wisdom, and apply his Heart to Understanding this Day; should any

be thus persuaded, it would be a happy New-Year to them indeed. I make you the Offer in the Name of my Great LORD, you poor, and wretched, and miserable Souls; of this great and blessed Treasure: And what will affect and inspire you if not this! I am glad to be able to assure you from the Word of

Prov. ii. *3, and following verses.* GOD, *That if you cry after Knowledge, and lift up your Voice for Understanding; if you seek her as Silver, and search for her as for hid Treasures; then shall you understand the Fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge of God.* If Wealth be your Ambition, behold a Treasure! If Poverty be your Dread, behold that which is incomparably more and greater than Thousands of Gold and Silver! Should your Estate be as much or more than your Heart can wish, let me tell you, it is as nothing, if you have no Lot and Portion in this Inheritance; and if you are ever so poor in this World, yet if you are rich towards GOD, all is well. What a mortifying Speech is that of Zophar, to the most advanc'd and most prosperous Times: *The triumphing of the Wicked is short, and the Joy of the Hypocrite, but for a Moment; he shall fly away as a Dream, and be chased away as a Vision of the Night; his Bones are full of the Sins of his Youth, which shall lie down with him in the Dust, he hath swallowed*

Job xx. *See from the 5th to the End.*

swallowed down Riches; and he shall vomit them up again; God shall cast them out of his Belly. In a Word, To possess this Treasure is Heaven; to miss of it for ever is Perdition; they who finally despise a Treasure in Heaven, God will despise, and reject for ever. Tremble to think thou vain, ignorant, and worldly-minded Creature, what Anguish will fill thy Soul, what Terrors will be upon thee, when thy fatal Mistake will be seen too late, and such Words as these be thundered in thine Ears; Because I have called, and ye have refused, I have stretched out my Hand, and no Man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my Counsel, and would none of my Reproof; I also will laugh at your Calamity, I will mock when your Fear cometh.

Prov. i.
24, 25, 26,

5. THIS rebukes the Envy and Uneasiness of good Men at the present Prosperity of the Wicked.

PROSPEROUS Wickedness, was such a Temptation to the Psalmist, that he had like to have overthrown his Faith in the Providence of GOD. When he saw the Wicked live and die with Ease and Comfort, and all their Pride, Prodigality, Luxury, and Oppression of others, go unpunish'd; he was ready to say, *I have cleansed my Heart in vain, in vain I have washed my Hands in Innocency; but the Sanctuary of God clear'd up this*

Psa. lxxiii.

this Matter ; there he was taught to understand their End, and found upon the whole, they were People more to be pity'd, than envy'd. Surely, *Thou didst set them in slippery Places ; Thou castest them down into Destruction. How are they brought into Desolation as in a Moment ! They are utterly consumed with Terrors. As a Dream when one awaketh ; so, O Lord, when Thou awakest, Thou shalt despise their Image.* Behold the End of prosperous Wickedness ! When we consider the inferior and ignoble Nature of present Things, the Uncertainty and Vexation which attends them ; how often they are Instruments and Occasions of Sin, how soon they must be left, and how sad an Account the Possessors of them oftentimes have to give, one would be well prepar'd to take the Psalmist's Advice, *Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the Glory of his House is increased. For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away ; his Glory shall not descend after him.* Let us take heed, we do not arraign the Equity of Providence ; we really do this, when wicked Men are envy'd by us because richer than we, and we wish ourselves with Egerness and Impatience in their Condition. Surely one Smile of the GOD of Heaven upon us, one peaceful Reflection in our own Bosoms,

Psal xlix.
16, 17.

Bosoms, one secret, hopeful Thought of being rich hereafter, and of shining, and reigning with CHRIST in Glory; is incomparably preferable to ever so many worldly Possessions. How many Men appear in outward State and Pomp, whose Character is vile, and whose Souls are wretched! How many inward Pangs, and secret Terrors often follow splendid Equipage, gay Attire, numerous Attendants, and all the Pageantry of worldly Greatness? And shall the Pious envy these? Shall good Men, whose Happiness is from within, from Above, wish themselves in the Place of the Wicked, GOD forbid! *What tho' they boast themselves in the Multitude of their Riches, think their Houses shall continue for ever, and call their Lands by their own Names; this their Way, is their Folly; like Sheep they shall be laid in the Grave, Death shall feed upon them.* Hagar's Wish stands recommended to our Experience as well as our Reason, *Give me neither Poverty nor Riches! but feed me with Food convenient for me.* The middle State is good and safe; but either Extream is very dangerous.

6. THIS exposes a covetous, and recommends a charitable and merciful Disposition, and Temper.

IT is one Part of our SAVIOUR'S Intention

Intention here, to shew that pressing Occasions of Charity ought to be regarded by rich and prosperous Mens Giving of Alms, is a good Sign of our Contempt of this World; and Charity makes it appear we have Faith in one to come. Something of what God has graciously given us, and we have honestly got, we should yet cheerfully part with at His Command. The Gospel, which is the great Rule of our Faith and Duty, insists much on Charity and Mercy, the Example of our Great MASTER, abundantly recommends it, *Who tho' He was rich, yet for our Sakes became poor.* And it gives yet farther Force to the Duty, when we consider, That herein, in part, consists our Conformity to GOD: *Love your Enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again: and your Reward shall be great, and ye shall be the Children of the Highest: For he is kind to the Unthankful and to the Evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.*

Luke vi.
35, 36.

F I N I S.

